

## **INCLUD-ED**

### ***CASE STUDY: SECONDARY SCHOOL IN LATVIA***

**Baltic Institute of Social Sciences**

***Project 2: European effective educational practices: How is  
education contributing to overcome or reproduce social  
exclusion? /WP8***

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## **Executive summary**

The aim of this report is to give an overview of the main findings from fieldwork to identify educational practices, which increase or decrease academic results of secondary school students. The emphasis was put on the school level practices (by teachers, students, administrators, parents, community members) that help students to keep their motivation. Summary of the findings are analysed within the two sections – inclusive practices and community participation.

The methodology used for data collection in the Riga Secondary school No. 94 included 11 open-ended interviews with teachers, relatives and students, one communicative focus group with six members of the school staff and five communicative observations in the classrooms, playground and meeting. The data were analyzed according to two research hypothesis on inclusive educational practices and community participation and along exclusionary and transformative dimensions.

The case study reveals that there are many inclusive dimensions taking place in Riga Secondary school No. 94, but at the same time there are practices that might be classified exclusionary and should be improved to provide superior learning process and student results.

There are inclusive practice that are functioning in a proper dimension - successful use of human resources, student heterogeneous grouping, provision of multicultural environment, to dispose disadvantaged groups of formation, successful practice to overcome cultural segregation, having high expectations for students.

However, some of inclusive practices are in need of improvement, e.g., parent participation in decision making process and organization of community participation; consultative activities for parents; inclusion of multiculturalism in planning of instrumental subjects, inclusive individual assistance, assuring students to have high expectations.

## **1. Introduction**

In the INCLUD-ED project 2 Work Package 7 four case studies were carried out by the Baltic Institute of Social Sciences at four educational levels: pre-primary; primary; secondary; vocational training programme.

The WP 8 report of the INCLUD-ED *CASE STUDY: SECONDARY SCHOOL IN LATVIA* by the Baltic Institute of Social Sciences aims to analyse European effective educational practices (Annex 1, p. 5). The basic research question is - how is education contributing to overcome or reproduce social exclusion in secondary education? Case studies took place in schools with low SES (socio-economic status) and minority background, which have successful results linking high academic achievement to inclusive practices.

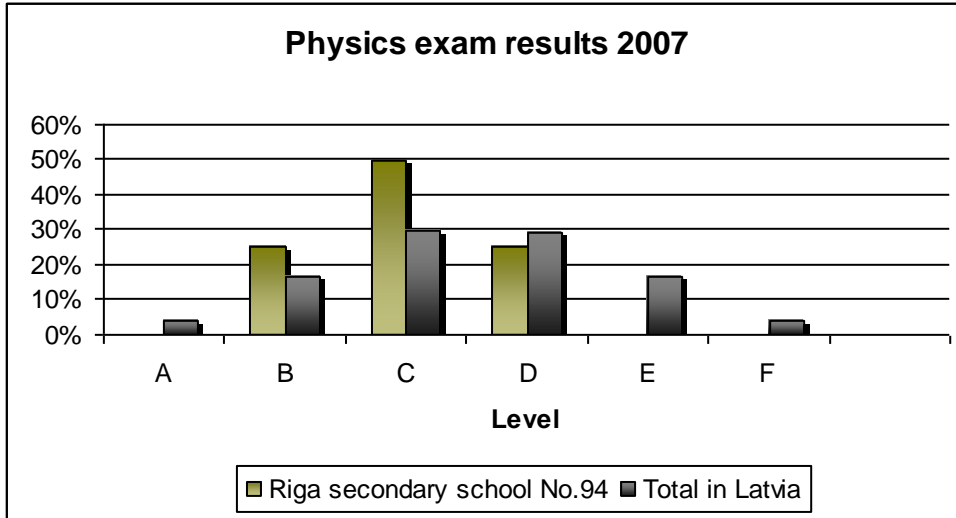
The school selection was based upon two main criteria established in Annex 1 of the Includ-ED Project. The school had to have a demonstrated contribution to student educational success and the school had to respond to a number of social characteristics, including low socio-economic status and students with a minority background.

In the school year 2006/2007 there were 383 secondary education schools in the state, 116 of them located in Riga. The main argument for choosing cases in the capital of the state is the high variability of ethnic groups.

The students of this school obtain very high grades in national centralized exams. E.g., in school year 2006/2007 71% obtained the highest grades (levels A, B and C) secondary schools and gymnasiums average – 60%.

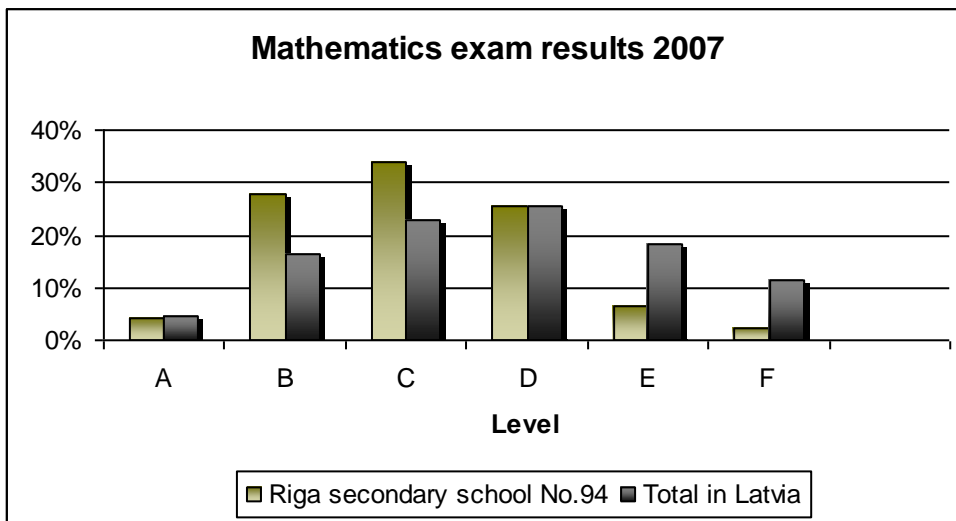
The following charts show the percentage of levels by subject obtained by students at Riga Secondary school No. 94 compared to the results obtained by all students in Latvia. Figure 1 represents Physics exams in 2007. The data reflects that half of the students at Riga Secondary school No. 94 achieved C level, but average results in the state were lower.

**Figure 1**



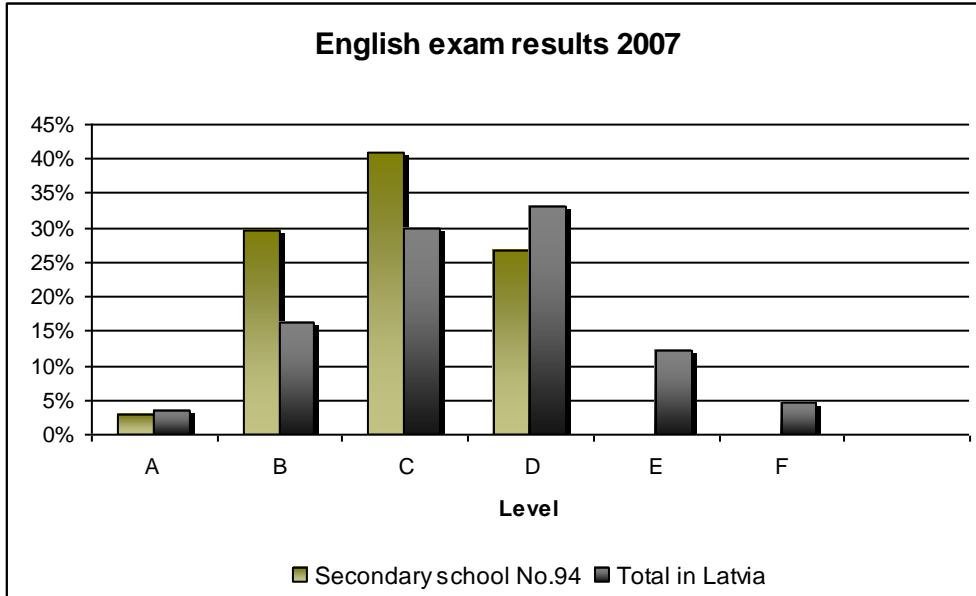
In Mathematics (Figure 2) only 2% people received the lowest level F, but throughout the whole state the percentage is 12%.

**Figure 2**



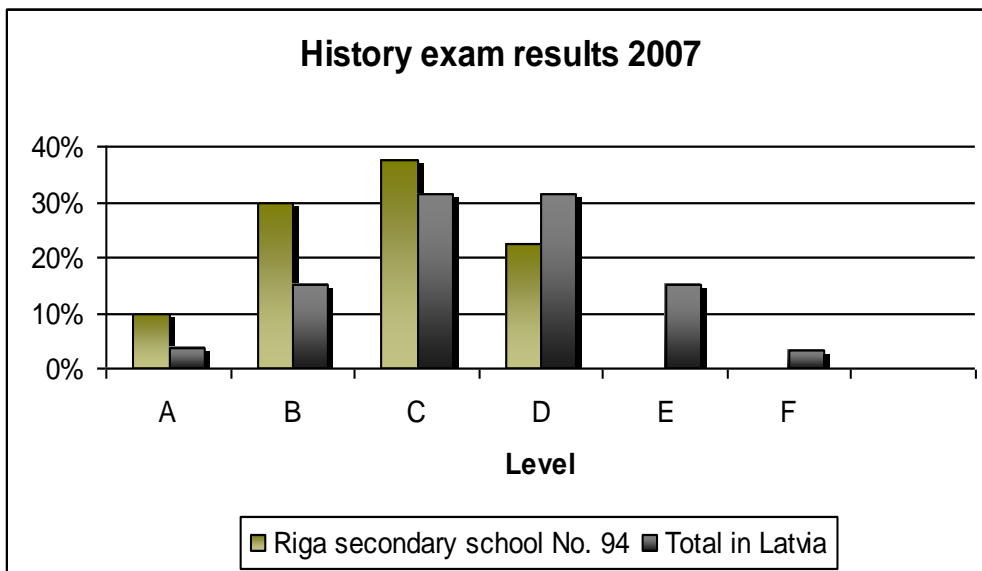
English (Figure 3) and History (Figure 4) exams in 2007 also reveal that on average in the country students obtained level D, but at Riga state secondary school No. 94 it was level C, which is higher.

**Figure 3**



Likewise in the History (Figure 4) exam and English exam (Figure 3) students from Riga Secondary school No. 94 did not receive the two lowest levels.

**Figure 4**



In the school year 2006/2007 it ranked at place 235 among all schools in Latvia. The ranking was calculated according to results in student competitions in various subjects.

85% of students at Riga state secondary school No. 94 continue to higher education after completing the secondary level.

In the school only 0-1% of school leavers obtain unsatisfactory results.

Currently there are 193 students at the secondary level at Riga Secondary school No. 94.

11% of students come from a minority background, mainly Russians (calculated for the whole school – primary and secondary level).

The school is located in Ziepniekkalns (-a) neighbourhood characterised by blockhouses built in Soviet times. There is high percentage of minority, mainly Russian residents.

Students in this school are mostly from average and low SES families.

Some of the students come from families that are involved in economic problems, emotional disorders or regular alcohol abuse, amongst other problems. Moreover, some of these families lack a significant amount of education.

## **2. Methodology**

The methodology used for the case study was chosen according to the INCLUD-methodological framework established in Annex 1. The methods of data collection used for the case study in Riga Secondary school No. 94 were:

- Two open-ended interviews carried out with two teachers and the headmaster of the secondary school;
- Three open-ended interviews with family members were carried out;
- Four open-ended interviews with students from the secondary school were carried out;
- A communicative focus group was carried out with a group of 6 teachers in the school, who work with secondary school students.
- One communicative observation was carried out in the hallway of the school;
- Two communicative observations were carried out in a classroom during a learning activity;
- One communicative observation of the playground was carried out in the school sports hall;
- One communicative observation of a meeting was carried out in a school meeting hall. The main topic of the meeting was student graduation and information about exams for secondary school graduates.

The analysis of the data is organized according to the division between inclusive practices and community participation. Based on Report 2 (page 8), the well-formed use of these two important components leads students to academic success.

In each part exclusionary and transformative dimensions are analyzed. The transformative dimension shows situations which contribute the student's academic success at secondary educational level. The exclusionary dimension



reflects situations, comments or actions which make educational success for secondary students difficult.

The data collection table presents each data identification code and short descriptions of its source.

Data collection was carried out from 02.04 to 15.05. 2008.

**Data collection table:**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Description</b>
CIF94_1	Secondary school 2 <sup>nd</sup> year student in a 3 year exact science programme
CIF94_2	Secondary school 3 <sup>rd</sup> year student in a 3 year exact science programme
CIF94_3	Secondary school 3 <sup>rd</sup> year student in a 3 year exact science programme
CIM94_4	Secondary school 2 <sup>nd</sup> year student in a 3 year exact science programme
RIM94_1	Father of two secondary school students, Byelorussian, secondary vocational, mechanic
RIF94_2	Mother of two secondary school students, Latvian, secondary education, administrator in a beauty lounge
RIF94_3	Mother of secondary school student, Russian, secondary education, manager in a warehouse
TIF94_1	German language teacher, Polish, working as a teacher for 9 years
TIF94_2	Chemistry teacher, Latvian, working as a teacher for 24 years
TIF94_3	Principal, math teacher, Latvian, working as a teacher for 35 years
Om94_1	Observation of meeting for parents, all secondary school parents
Oc94_2	Observation in Mathematics class, Secondary school 2 <sup>nd</sup> year students
Om94_3	Observation of hallway during the break
Oc94_4	Observation in Latvian language class, Secondary school 2 <sup>nd</sup> year students
Oc94_5	Observation of playground (optional sports activity) 10 male students and a teacher.
TG	Focus group discussion 6 with teachers (all female, subjects they teach: Mathematics, Biology, Sports, English, History, and Business.

### **3. Inclusive practices**

#### 3.1. Grouping the students and use of human resources

There are approximately 650 students at the school. The headmaster of the school considers that 'the best quantity for organization and supervision is around 600 students.'<sup>1</sup>

At Riga Secondary school No. 94 students are distributed into class groups according to the programme that was chosen by them before entering secondary school. Student can attend the next grade after he or she has received the certificate with marks of the previous grade.

There are three educational programmes in the secondary school – the exact science programme; the humanities programme; the general programme. 'These programmes are national order.'<sup>2</sup>

Students are able to make their own decision and choose the programme they find more interesting. Differences in class groups can be detected by the content of educational programmes. There are more mathematics and science subject lessons per week in the exact science programme, while the humanities programme has more Latvian language and literature lessons per week. The general programme offers integrated tuition mainly for those who have not decided on their specialism or interest yet. It contains a more substantial view into the study of history.

All respondents stated that it is not possible to change the chosen educational programme during the school years. If a student does well in a specific subject by self-education, it is possible to write the final exams in subjects that are not obligatory in the educational programme that has been chosen at the beginning of secondary education.

Officially there is no student streaming by educational level between classes, but the inner conventional system shows a different outlook. Students from the science programme class tend to achieve higher academic result than others. If

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<sup>1</sup> Vislabākais skaits ir apmēram par 600 skolēni. (T\_I\_F\_94\_3)

<sup>2</sup> Tās programmas jau dabīgi pēc valsts pasūtījuma. (F\_I\_M\_94\_3)

there are more applicants for one class than allowed or expected, the school organizes a primary school certificate contest.

There is no gender or ethnic segregation in grouping process. Both of the observed classes were heterogeneous. There are no causal relationship between educational programme, that student has chosen, and ethnical belonging of the student or disadvantaged group student belongs to.

No specific test has to be taken before entering the school. The only prerequisite to submit is a primary education graduation certificate. This certificate is given to all students who complete primary education and receive unsatisfactory evaluation in less than three subjects.

During learning activities there is one teacher in each classroom. Nevertheless in Riga Secondary school No. 94 pre-primary classes, practice is to have both a teacher and a special educator. This practice is new and it is not national order.

Within the classroom, there are a range of practices for grouping students. It can be done by grouping students in compliance with their wishes; by their placement in the classroom; by merging students with higher abilities together with students that have less ability, and the other way around.

One teacher explained that when she is arranging work teams, she usually puts the best students together with those who do not have very good academic results – ‘Usually I put the best ones with the weakest ones’<sup>3</sup> – in order to provide the possibility of teaching one another.

This transformative solution at the same time might lead to exclusionary results – which the weak student does not participate at all, instead just leaning on the more capable students.

The following reflections demonstrate the range of grouping practices within Riga Secondary school No.94:

‘Students are grouped by language studies. They can choose between Russian and German, depending on what they have been learning before. Also, students are grouped in halves in English class. There are also two alignments of optional

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<sup>3</sup> Parasti saliek kopā labākos ar vājākiem. (T\_I\_F\_94\_2)

subjects – geography and philosophy<sup>4</sup> and the other is visual arts, music and cultural history.

Taking into account the various programmes and optional subjects the grouping for the English lessons can follow several criteria – if the number of students is small no further division is implemented. The division into groups can be done according to the alphabetical order of names or according to knowledge levels, sometimes students' preferences can also be considered. The English lessons for these groups take place separately. The grouping allows the teacher to give more attention to individual students, their needs and provide additional support.

One of the optional subjects from each block has to be chosen. This is a definite option that does not depend on the educational programme. The decision about optional subjects is made based on personal interest in the learning activity.

One of the students gave an example on the decision process – 'There are students in the class that decided to study philosophy because they don't like geography tests and maps. But those who decided to study geography are not fond of the art of oratory.'<sup>5</sup>

Other student gave an example of the decision making process in the second optional subject block. He said: 'the students who fail to show any skills in music usually choose visual arts. The students, who don't like to draw, choose cultural history. Basically the only common characteristics there are only arise between the students who choose music.'<sup>6</sup> They are usually interested in music because they play instruments or work as DJs at their spare time.

'We have a teacher who is also a special educator.'<sup>7</sup> This special educator is working only with primary education classes; there also is a social educator who works in secondary school classes. She is responsible for providing information to students about their opportunities to receive financial support, for example, free meals or school books.

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<sup>4</sup> Klase dalās valodās. Ir krievu un vācu valoda, atkarībā, ko ir mācījies pirms tam. Un angļu valodā dalās uz pusēm. Vēl ir tādi izvēles priekšmeti – ģeogrāfija un filozofija (C\_I\_F\_94\_1)

<sup>5</sup> Kas kuram tuvāks, vai kuram, ir man klasē cilvēki, kas izvēlējās filozofiju, jo viņiem nepatīk ģeogrāfijas kontroldarbi, kartes. Bet citi atkal neņēma filozofiju, jo nepatīk lielā runāšana. (C\_I\_F\_94\_1).

<sup>6</sup> Vizuālo mākslu laikam izvēlējās tie, kuriem īpaši nepadodas mūzika, sakarā ar notīm un vispār mūzikas pierakstiem. Kultūras vēsturi savu kārt izvēlējās tie, kuriem nepatīk zīmēt. Principā kopīgs ir tiem, kas izvēlējās mūziku. (C\_I\_M\_94\_4)

<sup>7</sup> Mums ir skolotāja, kurai ir papildus izglītība speciālais pedagogs. (F\_I\_M\_94\_3)

### 3.2. Impact on disadvantaged groups

Coming from a disadvantaged group directly correlated with the low ability of a student to recognize reasonable resolutions for his or her future. Students who do not receive motivation from parents and teachers more often choose to avoid education. Important aspects are family conditions; relationships with classmates.

In interviews teachers, students and parents had different opinions about the meaning of the term – disadvantaged group. Because of the inconsequence of perception of the term, they had different opinions as to whether they have or haven't students form disadvantaged groups in their school.

It is difficult to indicate and separate a low-income family from a disadvantageous family particularly if the communication with the family is negligible and irregular. 'There are no remarkable differences between the parents of children in the school.'<sup>8</sup> According to students – they try not to emphasize their family income level. In order to tolerate each other students in secondary education level avoid pointing to socioeconomic inequality.

Some teachers admitted that the disadvantaged position of a student is related to the disadvantaged position of the family – low socioeconomic status, low parental education level. 'Indicators are usually connected with family'<sup>9</sup>

As previously mentioned, there is only one teacher in the classroom during one learning hour, which limits teachers' possibilities to give individual instructions to all students. There is a basic direction to choose whether a teacher pays more attention to more clever students or he/she tries not to leave anyone behind.

'Main attention is concentrated on the students who are in disadvantaged groups and have difficulties in studies. The teacher spends approximately 70% of the time on these students and only 30% on the rest.'<sup>10</sup> This shows that students from disadvantaged groups have preferential treatment.

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<sup>8</sup> Bet tā kā vecāki, es neesmu ievērojusi, ka būtu tādas ļoti lielas atšķirības. (R\_I\_F\_94\_3)

<sup>9</sup> Pazīmes saistās lielākoties ar ģimeni (F\_I\_M\_94\_3)

<sup>10</sup> Skolas mīnus faktiski ir tāds, ka uzsvars tiek pamatā laika attiecības apmēram 70 vai 30 procenti, pat vairāk, kā kurā skolā aiziet tiem bērniem, kam mācībās neveicās. (F\_I\_M\_94\_3)

The school offers the possibility to attend extra classes for those who do not understand or have not been present at a test. 'They have these consultative classes, where a student can come and learn for free. For example there is such a class in math in the secondary school three times a week.'<sup>11</sup> Commonly consultative classes are used only for rewriting or writing the missed tests, not so much to explain the material. The consultative classes are open for all students; however they are especially important for students who have some difficulties in acquiring the material. The individual assistance offered in the consultative classes helps students to catch up with others in their class and to avoid the increase of the difficulties in the long run.

There are occasions when consultative classes are used to catch up with the material. 'All students have the same exercises and tasks, but if somebody is absent for a longer period of time the teacher offers other possibilities and different test rewriting deadlines.'<sup>12</sup>

'Additional tasks are set only for the students who are planning to participate in special subject competitions for students.'<sup>13</sup> This information shows that there is attention given to students with higher ability as well.

There is no systematic planning that involves multiculturalism in learning subjects in Riga Secondary school No. 94, because nobody is directly responsible for this action. In interview one non-Latvian student said 'I know that specially in the primary school kids with different nationalities have problems with macrons and extenuate signs, sometimes there are unintelligible words, but if there is somebody who explains, there're no problems.'<sup>14</sup> To avoid inequality there is some planning done to help students their language course. 'Personal attitude is what makes students attend consulting classes.'<sup>15</sup>

School leadership leaves teaching method selection as an area of teacher responsibility. 'We trust our teachers and we pay attention to results, we don't

<sup>11</sup> Viņiem ir tās papildu stundas, kur var iet bērns par velti mācīties, piemēram, matemātikas ir kaut kur trīs reiz nedēļā. (R\_I\_F\_94\_2)

<sup>12</sup> Principā visi dara vienu, bet ja skolēns ir slimojis ilgi tad, protams, viņam piedāvā citas iespējas, (C\_I\_F\_94\_1)

<sup>13</sup> Atšķirība ir tikai tiem skolēniem, kas tieši gatavojas olimpiādēm.(C\_I\_F\_94\_2)

<sup>14</sup> Es zinu, ka tas ir mazajās klasēs tieši ar tām garumzīmēm, mīkstinājumiem tur nesanāk, tur nesaprot kādus vārdus, kamēr paskaidro, bet pēc tam jau aiziet. /konteksts: runā par citu tautību bērniem/(C\_I\_F\_94\_1)

<sup>15</sup> Personiska attieksme tiek nodrošināta, kas savukārt veicina to, ka skolēni patiešām apmeklē šīs konsultācijas. (T\_I\_F\_94\_2)

argue about details. We solve questions when it's necessary.<sup>16</sup> This position enables creativity and demonstrates rational leadership. At the same time the teacher takes the dominant role in the educational process, so the importance of teacher-student relationships increases. The inclusive part of this practice is an individual approach to a situation. One of the teachers admitted that the 'main reason behind the children's good academic results is individual work with them.'<sup>17</sup>

The potential subjectivity of a teacher is a more exclusionary dimension of this practice. 'If a teacher sometimes makes an inconsiderate statement or action, that pushes a student away, there is no connection.'<sup>18</sup>

In interviews, one of the students and a few of the teachers shared dissatisfaction about general educational irregularity in Latvia. Standards of judgement in each school are different and it is difficult to understand one's knowledge level in the national context before national centralized exams. This practice places students from schools with lower average standards in a disadvantaged position.

'I would definitely make corrections in educational programmes and leave more things to secondary school and less to primary. [...] That unstable personality is overcrowded with information. The student is not able to separate important things from unimportant. And that is why the results are not always that good.'<sup>19</sup> In order to help students from disadvantaged groups fit in to the educational system, primary education should be less academic and more practical.

'She always calls if there are any problems or unsolved questions. She's very sympathetic.'<sup>20</sup> Some teachers are actively involved in making ground for disadvantaged students by motivating them, communicating with their parents, talking to other teachers.

<sup>16</sup> Mēs skolotājiem uzticamies, skatāmies uz rezultātiem, nekasāmies par sīkumiem, risinām jautājumus, tad kad viņi ir jārisina. (R\_I\_F\_94\_3)

<sup>17</sup> Galvenais iemesls skolēnu sasniegumiem ir individuāls darbs ar skolēnu. (T\_I\_F\_94\_2)

<sup>18</sup> Skolotājs ar kādu neuzmanīgu vārdu, rīcību, to bērnu atgrūž, nav kontakts. (F\_I\_M\_94\_3)

<sup>19</sup> Jā, es katrā ziņā padomātu par šo programmu, palabotu nedaudz, akcentus pārbīdītu vairāk uz vidusskolu. [...]Tā nenoturīgā psihe tiek pārblīvēta, un viņš nav iemācīts, un to ir ļoti grūti iemācīt atšķirt svarīgo no mazsvarīgā, un līdz ar to tie rezultāti dažkārt nav tik labi. (F\_I\_M\_94\_3)

<sup>20</sup> Cik reizes viņa man zvanīja, ja kaut kādi jautājumi vai kādas nepatīkšanas. Un viņa ļoti pārdzīvo. (R\_I\_F\_94\_3)

For teachers the most important motivation for work is interest shown by a student. 'If the teacher notices that student is willing to work, he will definitely help him.'<sup>21</sup>

'One good mark is motivation. But generally grades sometimes don't represent knowledge, for example, if you're not ready for a test, but afterwards you study everything.'<sup>22</sup> The system in Latvia is based and orientated on marks that students receive. Teachers are able to evaluate the knowledge of students in numbers from 1 to 10, where 1 is the lowest and 10 highest. All parental expectations and student motivations during the learning process are connected directly with marks.

An inclusive practice that helps students from families with lower income is the second hand book market. 'We have a book market at the end and beginning of the year, where there's a possibility to buy books cheaper.'<sup>23</sup>

Almost all interview respondents admitted that income is not connected with educational success. One of students has noticed that 'students who are less affluent usually study better. I don't really know why.'<sup>24</sup>

All interview respondents agreed that there are no students with visible disabilities at the school. Disabled people have to have special educational programmes and the building has to be fitted with wheelchair ramps, which is the basic reason why they are not attending this school.

One typical problem in the secondary educational level is student employment, which is an important obstacle in achieving successful academic results. 'There are children that are usually late in the mornings because they work all night and they run by leaps and bounds or they just sleep all morning.'<sup>25</sup> This practice is rather popular, especially in the last year of secondary education.

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<sup>21</sup> Ja skolotājs redz, ka bērns vēlas, noteikti nav tādu, kas nepalīdz. (C\_I\_F\_94\_2).

<sup>22</sup> Nē, viena laba atzīme ir motivācija, bet ja kopumā skatās uz atzīmēm, tas ne vienmēr parāda to cik daudz tu zini, jo ir daudz kritēriju, piemēram, kontroldarbos tu neesi sagatavojies, bet vēlāk tu visu zini. (C\_I\_M\_94\_4)

<sup>23</sup> Mums ir gadu beigās, gada sākumā ir grāmatu tirdziņš, kur var nopirkt grāmatas lētāk. (C\_I\_M\_94\_4)

<sup>24</sup> Cilvēki, kas ir mazāk nodrošināti, viņi parasti mācās labāk. Īsti nezinu kāpēc. (C\_I\_M\_94\_4)

<sup>25</sup> Ir bērni, kas, pieņemsim, stundas kavē no rītiem, ja, kuri strādā varbūt kaut kur un pa galvu pa kaklu metās, vai miedziņš nāk (R\_I\_F\_94\_2)



'Many of those in the last year of secondary school live an adult life, that's why they want to become financially independent, so they search for a job. Naturally one of consequences is fatigue and consequently a fall in academic results.'<sup>26</sup>

Work is not the only problem in the secondary education level, personal relations was indicated as a problem in interviews as well. 'She found herself a boyfriend and started to skip classes. So her results have declined by a lot. Now it's not clear whether she will be permitted to write exams, but she was studying very well before.'<sup>27</sup>

For primary school students, after lessons there are spare time classes where they can play novuss, do homework, read, eat. 'Secondary school students don't go to these because they have basketball, football, karate classes.'<sup>28</sup>

### 3.3. Impact on overcoming cultural segregation

Several years ago all the students of one class in a 'Russian' school were assigned to Riga Secondary school No. 94. All students that came with recommendations from the teaching staff graduated the school successfully, but 6 of the students who came without recommendations did not finish secondary education in this school.

There are no special learning materials for students that represent cultural minorities. They learn from the same material as the rest of the students. One of the Russian minority students admitted that 'it's hard to express myself especially in essays and compositions; I can feel that I am thinking in Russian'.<sup>29</sup>

One exclusionary practice reflected at Riga Secondary school No. 94 is that there is no provision of additional support provided to students that have a minority background. This develops the possibility of an increase in the number of students with learning difficulties.

<sup>26</sup> Daudzi jau no viņiem vidusskolas pēdējos gadus faktiski dzīvo jau pieaugušu cilvēku dzīvi, līdz ar to viņi grib būt patstāvīgi un meklē sev peļņas avotu, lai būtu finansiāla neatkarība, sava rīcības nauda. Dabīgi tas izraisa šos blakus efektus kā nogurumu, nu kā rezultātu krišanu mācībās.(F\_I\_M\_94\_3)

<sup>27</sup> Atrada puisī un sāka skolu kavēt un līdz ar to sekmes ir ļoti nokritušas, kad jau pastāv jautājums, vai viņa vispār ies uz eksāmeniem, bet mācījās ļoti labi. (R\_I\_F\_94\_2)

<sup>28</sup> Un lieli neiet, tāpēc, ka ir gan basketbols, gan futbols un vēl nodarbības, karatē, vismaz pagaidām. (C\_I\_M\_94\_4)

<sup>29</sup> Sacerējumos gan grūti izteikties, jo jūtama tieši krievu valodas domāšana. (C\_I\_F\_94\_2)

At Riga Secondary school No. 94 one of the typical inclusive practice is mixing students across gender and ethnicity together in classrooms. This illustrates the possibilities of coexistence and reflects a direct correspondence on socialization ability.

In the learning process teachers avoid hierarchic placement of cultures, religions and ethnic backgrounds. One of students explained the position of a teacher – ‘she doesn’t enforce religion or anything else. She says it’s private.’<sup>30</sup>

The school tries to provide students with coexistence practice where there are different nationalities involved. ‘A few years ago we had an English teacher from Lebanon.’<sup>31</sup> These kinds of actions help to overcome cultural segregation.

Students with learning difficulties and students from disadvantaged backgrounds are placed in regular classes. By this the school achieves coexistence, which has an impact on overcoming ethnical segregation.

‘There are no conflicts about nationalities. I’d rather say there are discussions about style and fashion.’<sup>32</sup> This statement shows that problems could arise between students with low income and high income, because fashion usually demands money.

Most of parents deny the existence of any difference between Russians and Latvians, because in daily life there is no visible difference between nationalities – ‘my daughter has Latvian friends, that’s why they are my friends as well. And our neighbours are Russians, and they are also friends.’<sup>33</sup> This denial usually shows the will to live in a healthy coexistence.

At the same time there are cultural differences, sometimes there are language barriers or different levels of activity. One of the students admitted that ‘students of other nationalities are more active.’<sup>34</sup> (By other nationality they mean other than Latvian.)

<sup>30</sup> Viņa neuzspiež ne reliģiju, ne ko citu. Tā esot katra paša lieta. (C\_I\_F\_94\_2).

<sup>31</sup> angļu valodu mācīja skolotājs no Libānas

<sup>32</sup> Par tautībām konfliktu nav drīzāk par stilu un modi. (T\_I\_F\_94\_2)

<sup>33</sup> Man meita draudzējas gan ar latviešu dabīgi mums viņi draugi, un kaimiņi viņai krievi (R\_I\_F\_94\_3)

<sup>34</sup> Cittautieši ir aktīvāki. (T\_I\_F\_94\_2)

Also one of parents noted that 'some of the traditions are different',<sup>35</sup> but generally in Riga Secondary school no. 94 'nationalities don't affect mutual relations too much.'<sup>36</sup>

A concept that arose in a few interviews was a good community – 'I have studied at more than one school and this exact school is good because of its community. Teachers are very supportive. It's very cosy here.'<sup>37</sup> In this particular case the community is students, teachers and school staff.

A specific characteristic, that could also be pointed out as exclusionary, arose from minority students with the native language of Russian – 'Students from Russian speaking families usually study the Russian language when they have to choose between Russian and German.'<sup>38</sup> They prohibit themselves from acquiring new proficiencies, because of various reasons. There are some expectations that their families have in relation of this decision and it's easier for them to study something they already know.

### 3.4. High expectations

Teachers as well as students and parents in general have heterogeneous expectations regarding the academic results of students. High expectations for students are not related to ethnical origin, gender or socioeconomic status.

Students also eventually discuss high expectations that teachers and school staff have for each individual: 'I'm certain that teachers have high expectations for all students. Results cannot be identical, I'm sure that teachers realize that not all are able to achieve excellent results. That's why I think that they expect good results, but not equal.'<sup>39</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Kaut kādas tradīcijas ir, jā, atšķiras ir. (R\_I\_F\_94\_3)

<sup>36</sup> Savstarpējās attiecības tautības īpaši neietekmē.(T\_I\_F\_94\_1)

<sup>37</sup> Nu, principa esmu mācījies vairākās skolās, un mana skola ir labāka ar to, ka es tieši varu ieiet tajā sabiedrībā. Un arī skolotāji ir atsaucīgi. Viss tā mājīgi. (C\_I\_M\_94\_4)

<sup>38</sup> Tie, kas dzīvo krievu ģimenēs viņi ņēma kā mācību valodu krievu valodu, nevis vācu valodu (C\_I\_F\_94\_1)

<sup>39</sup> Esmu pārliecināts, ka skolotāja no visiem gaida labus rezultātus. Vienādi viņi nevar būt, jo es domāju, ka skolotāja apzinās, ka katrs mācās savādāk, līmenis arī nav visiem viens. Tāpēc es domāju skolotājā gaida labu rezultātus, bet ne vienādus.(C\_I\_M\_94\_4)

One respondent from the teaching staff gave a similar answer – ‘It’s not possible to ask for identical results from everybody, because people are not talented equally in all subjects, but it’s necessary to provide the chance to succeed for everyone.’<sup>40</sup>

The teachers strictly believe that students that have successfully finished Riga Secondary school No. 94 can go to university.

Although not all of the teachers expect that all students will finish the school. One of students said about teachers – ‘the attitude is like we are all going to university.’<sup>41</sup>

The school provides some opportunities for students to learn about their future options beyond secondary school. Sometimes in the last year of secondary education students from universities come and explain what possibilities there are after graduation of a specific university department.

To students that a teacher has higher expectations of additional tasks are given to prepare them for competitions. One of the students that participated in competitions said – ‘not to simply sit in the classroom I had some extra tasks.’<sup>42</sup>

‘Between the ages of 16 and 18 people are rather undecided. Seldom do students have a straight answer as to the exact thing they want to do and nothing else.’<sup>43</sup> Teachers feel responsible about the decisions of their students because they realize that it is in their power to encourage or sometimes even change the path the student has chosen. It is acknowledged by students and parents: ‘The math teacher pushed her to choose the exact science programme, because she believed that she’s able to succeed.’<sup>44</sup>

Teachers have to set high standards for students. They admit that ‘there is no time to repeat anything.’ ‘Teachers have national programme to follow. It is the

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<sup>40</sup> Vienādi labus rezultātus nevar prasīt, jo visi cilvēki visos priekšmetos nav vienādi apdāvināti, taču iespēja būt būs sekmīgam ir jādod visiem. (T\_I\_F\_94\_1)

<sup>41</sup> Viss mums ir orientēts tā, ka visiem mums būs augstskola. (C\_I\_F\_94\_2)

<sup>42</sup> Lai nav stundā jāsež, man deva papildus klāt. (C\_I\_F\_94\_1)

<sup>43</sup> Tajā vecumā 16 līdz 18 gadi jaunietis ir svārstīgs. Ja mēs ar skolēniem tā parunājam, ļoti reti būtu bērni, kuram ir viena skaidra atbilde, viens variants, doma es gribu to un tikai to un neko citu. (F\_I\_M\_94\_3)

<sup>44</sup> Matemātikas skolotāja viņu piespieda iet uz eksakto programmu, jo ticēja, ka viņja to var. (R\_I\_F\_94\_2)

student that suffers.<sup>45</sup> This situation creates an enabling environment for the development of disadvantaged groups. 'At least this year there is a possibility to attend consulting hours,<sup>46</sup> that allow students to catch up on information that has been missed.

Teachers mention lack of attention as the main source of mistakes – 'students disregard and don't pay attention to conditions of a task.'<sup>47</sup>

Students at the same time concentrate more on lack of motivation – 'most likely it's laziness. There is also this theory that it won't be necessary for me. It's very popular in chemistry and other subjects.'<sup>48</sup>

In observation it was possible to identify both of these aspects, but generally it is typical that students do not want to recognize details that they do not understand and teachers are not motivated enough to have an individual approach to students each time.

'It's simply not possible to understand, what it is that he wants from you'.<sup>49</sup> Students do not deny that sometimes there are miscommunication problems and this also reflects on expectations of students. If a student often shows that he or she is not able to understand, the teacher has lower expectations for that student.

'My daughter attended exhibition in the exhibition hall 'Ķīpsala' where she collected brochures of higher education institutions, now she is planning to go through all of them together with her aunt.'<sup>50</sup> The exhibition gives information about possibilities for student in future. Teachers and school staff always informs students in advance about the important events that involves educational evolution.

<sup>45</sup> Nav jau laika atkārtot. 'Un skolotājs ir iedzīts tajā rāmī, kādā viņš. Ciešs jau skolēns. (F\_I\_M\_94\_3)

<sup>46</sup> Tagad valsts otra puse, tagad šajā gadā ir tas konsultāciju laiks. (F\_I\_M\_94\_3)

<sup>47</sup> 'Ar Neuzmanību un neiedziļināšanos uzdevuma nosacījumos. (T\_I\_F\_94\_1)

<sup>48</sup> Nu droši vien slinkums, necenšas. Ir vel arī tāda teorija, ka man tas nebūs vajadzīgs. Populāra teorija, principā ķīmijā un visos priekšmetos. (C\_I\_M\_94\_4)

<sup>49</sup> Tu vienkārši nesaproti, ko vēlas no tevis (C\_I\_F\_94\_2)

<sup>50</sup> Man meita tikai uz izstādi aizgāja 'Ķīpsalā'. Savācās bukletus veselu kaudzi un tagad sēdēs ar savu krustmāti un studēs. (R\_I\_F\_94vsk\_2)

### 3.5. Others

In interviews most teachers mentioned that the basic strength of this school is its constant staff. A teacher who has been working in this school for nine years admits that 'Good teaching staff have an important role in the academic results of students'.<sup>51</sup> The experience and knowledge that a teacher collects throughout the years might become a collateral addition to help in understanding students. At the same time it can show as passivity in recognizing the new teaching methods that are brought to light.

The main reason behind the low staff turnover is relationships between colleagues. One of the respondent teachers replied to the question on the reasons behind the situation in this way – 'I think it's the good relationships with each other.'<sup>52</sup> If there are good relationships between teachers they are able to work as a team in order to teach students and it leads to higher success rates.

A teacher needs to be a bright personality; he or she needs to create interest in students and at the same time students also have respect for the teacher. 'If you have to talk about discipline, raising your voice, it's not easy to work.'<sup>53</sup> The learning process becomes easier if the educator is someone that the student wants to look up to and he or she knows how to present the theme in an interesting way for students.

'If a teacher has a chance to come up individually and communicate with students, I think it's very good. I mean if a child has something that he is aiming for, and there is something that he is interested in.'<sup>54</sup>

One of the teachers thinks that in order to achieve good academic results there should be no homework, because students today are not ready to do homework anymore. 'It's not useful to give homework to students. They are very loaded with activities and they never do homework anyway. They copy it.'<sup>55</sup> There are two dimensions to this statement. On one hand she could be right, but at the

<sup>51</sup> Liela nozīme ir arī labam pedagogu kolektīvam ar pieredzi. (R\_I\_F\_94\_1)

<sup>52</sup> Es domāju tās ir savstarpējās attiecības starp cilvēkiem. (R\_I\_F\_94\_3)

<sup>53</sup> Ja tev ir jārunā par disciplīnu, jāpaceļ balsi, tad ir grūti, nav viegli strādāt. (R\_I\_F\_94\_3)

<sup>54</sup> Ja skolotājam ir iespējas katram individuāli pieiet, kaut ko pateikt un aizrādīt, un palīdzēt - es domāju, kas tas ir ļoti labi! Es domāju, ja bērnam ir kaut kāds mērķis, ja viņš kaut ko grib, pieņemsim, nu, kas viņu interesē. (R\_I\_F\_94\_2)

<sup>55</sup> Nevajag uzdot mājas darbus. Bērni šodien ir ļoti noslogoti un viņi nepilda mājas darbus. Vienkārši noraksta.

same time homework is the individual work of a student where independence and self-control are learnt.

The school offers some free time activities for students after lessons - 'there is a choir, music group and now we have a fitness hall.'<sup>56</sup> This ensures that students spend their free time reasonably.

'We show that we are grateful to our students and teachers.'<sup>57</sup> Evaluation of work is important for everybody and it is commendable that the school administration shows that they care about the achievements of their teachers and students.

## **4. Community participation**

### 4.1. Community participation in decision making processes and in student's learning processes

During the observation of a parental meeting there was a possibility to see the main activity where parents are involved during the secondary school student learning process.

These meetings in school take place approximately 2 times a year. There usually is one basic issue that has to be discussed during the meeting. Discussion is organized in a lectures form. For example, during the observed meeting information was given to parents about the final exams and results of the previous year. Lectures are a more exclusionary form of communication and there is also a lack of negotiations between teachers and parents. These lectures are organized rather seldom and usually deal with issues related directly to the schooling process. Through lectures parents receive information about some aspects of the schooling and therefore can involve themselves in controlling and motivating their children.

There also are parental meetings on class level, where parents discuss the same things as in the school meetings just in smaller groups among parents of one

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<sup>56</sup> Mūsu skolā ir koris, ansamblis, tagad arī mums ir trenažieru zāle.(C\_I\_F\_94\_1)

<sup>57</sup> Mēs sakām paldies gan bērniem, gan skolotājiem.(F\_I\_M\_94\_3)

class. In these meetings parents are little more open. 'There are approximately five parents, who participate.'<sup>58</sup> The rest of the parents only are present, but they don't take any action if they are not invited. 'When there are parental meetings they come and participate. They share their opinion and help organizing events and if necessary prepare presents for the school. There's no other way.'<sup>59</sup>

Even though the school is working quite deliberately to obtain greater parental involvement by inviting them to school and sending information sheets, there still is a communication barrier between them. That might be the reason why 'all in all parents come more seldom.'<sup>60</sup>

Riga Secondary school No. 94 teaching staff links the participation of parents in decision making processes with the students successful results, but at the same time parents have different statement on the participation model – 'Parents have different interests. For example to parental meetings of my daughter's class I don't go anymore. She has no problems.'<sup>61</sup>

In general those parents who are involved in the school in some ways are better informed about the schooling processes. They also have more opportunities to find out about the difficulties of their children. This gives the parents the opportunity to provide additional help to their children and thereby improve their academic success.

Student learning activities and evaluation process is very distant from parent participation, because there is an assumption that on secondary education level it's already too late to change student's personality. 'Parents at least in primary school should follow their children until they are sure that children will be able to take care of themselves.'<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Iesaistās, nu, kādi pieci reāli. (C\_I\_F\_94\_1)

<sup>59</sup> Tad kad ir vecāku sapulces, tad nāk un piedalās un izsaka savu viedokli, kaut kādas naudas vākt vai organizēt kādu pasākumu, tur dāvanas skolai, vai vēl kaut ko, tur jau piedalās. Savādāk jau nevar. (C\_I\_F\_94\_1)

<sup>60</sup> Bet vispār vecāki nāk mazāk. (R\_I\_F\_94\_3)

<sup>61</sup> Nē, nu vecākiem jau dažāda interese, redziet, es jau uz meitas sapulcēm ļoti maz eju, jo man jau problēmu nav. (R\_I\_F\_94\_2)

<sup>62</sup> Vecāki vismaz sākumposmā ir sekojuši uzmanīgi bērnam līdz, līdz tam brīdim, kad viņi zina, uz bērnu var pajauties, un tas nav vajadzīgs vairāk. (F\_I\_M\_94\_3)



Still there is a different opinion, but the motivation is rather unintelligible – ‘we came to the parental meeting, and in the previous year I came to meetings; I go to meetings every time. Meetings are obligatory.’<sup>63</sup>

Students don’t deny the important role that parents have in student’s ability to achieve good results: ‘Parents are 50%. At school there’s teacher. Adults encourage. Nowadays when student comes home, he automatically sits in front of the computer and forgets about studies. And at that point there come parents to say: listen, you should be doing some homework?’<sup>64</sup>

‘Of course we wish that parents would participate more. I wouldn’t say that parents are very active, maybe at the primary school.’<sup>65</sup> With some of the disadvantaged groups, the school is working deliberately to obtain greater parental involvement and communicates with parents more than once in 2 weeks.

One of the ways that the school attempts to increase family member involvement is through a signature and phone call communication with parents. If there is any kind of problem with student teacher usually calls parents to talk it over. ‘If student have some small problems, parents talk to teacher individually.’<sup>66</sup> It can be done by phone, after parental meeting or in a special meeting that is organized for teacher and parents in school.

If students have learning difficulties or unsatisfactory evaluation in more than 3 subjects, than teacher always informs parents about the situation.

Even though ‘parents are extremely passive, they are uninterested. They make excuses with preoccupancy.’<sup>67</sup> Students point out that ‘they help in different ways – to choose the school, to chose the general race in life.’<sup>68</sup> The parental participation in decision making processes takes place outside the school building.

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<sup>63</sup> Mēs bijām uz sapulci un arī pagājušajā gadā, visu laiku eju uz sapulcēm. Sapulces tas ir obligāti. (R\_I\_F\_94\_3)

<sup>64</sup> Vecāki ir 50%. Jo ir skolā ir skolotāja. Pieaugošie cilvēki ir tie, kas mudina. Jo mūsdienās parasti, kad skolnieks atnāk mājās, piesēžas pie datora un aizmirst par mācībām, un vecāki, ir tie, kas pasaka: paskaties, tev taču ir jāmācās! (C\_I\_M\_94\_4)

<sup>65</sup> Dabīgi mēs gribētu, lai vecāki vairāk iesaistās, neteikšu, ka būtu ļoti aktīvi vecāki. Sākumskolā, sākumposmā vecāki ir aktīvāki. (F\_I\_M\_94\_3)

<sup>66</sup> Ja skolēnam ir kādas sīkas problēmas, tad vecāki runā atsevišķi. (C\_I\_F\_94\_1)

<sup>67</sup> Ļoti pasīvi, vecāki kļūst aizvien neieinteresētāki. Atrunājas ar aizņemtību. (T\_I\_F\_94\_2)

<sup>68</sup> Gan vienkārši palīdz, gan izvēlēties skolu un vispār to dzīves ceļu. (C\_I\_F\_94\_1)

'Students self-government works poorly. Parents cannot participate, because they don't know what's happening. There's nothing written in the journal.'<sup>69</sup> One of parents was more than certain that students should take more responsibility in order to gain better results. It's the time when they should start their own development and independence in thinking and action.

'We give some recommendations. If a student isn't very talented in math or other science subjects and he has good grades in all subjects, but his friends' gives application to math programme.'<sup>70</sup> School staff admits that they try to prove students to make decision that is appropriate for students ability.

As it was already mentioned before – 'teacher chooses teaching methods, and subject themes. It's all on his conscience. He knows the class.'<sup>71</sup> Teachers admit that 'the teaching method depends on the class activity.'<sup>72</sup> That once again shows that there is great role of teacher in decision making about student's learning processes.

There is parental board in Riga Secondary school No 94. They are elected, but sometimes school administration invites some parents to join the board. This parental board is involved in decision-making process of the school that is related to school building, events that take place in school, they help organizing optional activities. They usually don't discuss academic success of students.

'Teacher said that soon there will be webpage. She said it last year. It will be possible to see everything there. That will be much more interesting. And there parental opinion will be enquired.'<sup>73</sup> The webpage is expected as web journal for students; parents and teachers, with all evaluations, marks and explanations, besides that there will be possible to communicate with each other by e-mesasges. This is one of inclusive practice, which provides commendable interaction between parents, teachers and students.

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<sup>69</sup>Slikti strādā skolēnu pašpārvalde. Vecāki nevar iesaistīties, ja viņš nezina, kas notiek, ko es varu apskatīties, ja dienasgrāmatā nekas nav rakstīts. (R\_I\_F\_94\_1)

<sup>70</sup>Jā, mēs rekomendējam. Ja bērnam nav spējas matemātikā, eksaktajos priekšmetos kā fizika, ķīmija, un viņam tur draugs, draudzene startē, teiksim viņam tās vidējās atzīmes ir labas, par tādiem skolēniem iet runa. (F\_I\_M\_94\_3)

<sup>71</sup>Skolotājs var izvēlēties metodes, skolotājs var izvēlēties arī tēmas. Tas viss ir uz skolotāju sirdsapziņu, ko viņš redz, kāda ir klase. (F\_I\_M\_94\_3)

<sup>72</sup>Mācīšanas metodes atkarīgas no skolēnu aktivitātes. (T\_I\_F\_94\_1)

<sup>73</sup> Pasniedzēja, viņa teica, ka drīz būs skolas mājas lapa liela, tas ne šogad, pagājušogad viņa teica. Ne tikai, tur varēs arī visu redzēt, kā arī tās visas atzīmes. Tas būs jau interesantāk. Un tur prasīs ko vecāki domā. (R\_I\_F\_94\_1)

#### 4.2. Repercussions on successful results and good coexistence

Riga Secondary school No. 94 teaching staff links the participation of community members in decision making process to successful results and good coexistence, but they don't invest intensive work in actions that would develop this participation.

The school currently is making attempts at gaining more parental involvement, by opening fitness hall in school where parents can come in specific hours, where parents can meet in informal atmosphere.

Student-teacher relationship is highly important in order to build good coexistence in school – 'student's motivation depends on cooperation between a teacher and a student.'<sup>74</sup>

'Form master has a very important role in unity development. She avoids conflicts and gives students that necessary impulse.'<sup>75</sup> It might be the leading line for solidity of students form one class.

Coexistence is very important in the general mood setting. If the general mood in the classroom is to learn something new, then the uncertain students chose to study. 'Prestige's school differ form the rest with only one thing – student inner motivation.'<sup>76</sup> Since Riga Secondary school No. 94 is not one of the prestige's school students often have lack of motivation.

The average results also affect the possibility for student to continue education. 'Those who study better than the average will continue to study. At the moment it's about 6 to 7. I haven't asked those, who study under this average level, but I now it'll be hard for them.'<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Motivācija nav tikai atkarīga tikai no skolotāja un tikai no bērna. Es domāju no viņu savstarpējās sadarbības. (R\_I\_F\_94\_2)

<sup>75</sup> Klases audzinātājam ir ļoti svarīga loma klases saliedētībā. Pirmkārt viņa nav konfliktu cilvēks. Un viņa it kā dod iniciatīvu bērniem. (R\_I\_F\_94\_3)

<sup>76</sup> Elitāra skola no parastās skolas, manā uztverē, atšķiras ar vienu lietu – skolēnu motivāciju. (F\_I\_M\_94\_3)

<sup>77</sup> Tie, kas mācās augstāk par vidējo līmeni, tie noteikti studēs. Vidējais līmenis ir jāspriež pēc vidējās atzīmes. Šobrīd tā ir 6, 7. Tie, kas mācās sliktāk, es neesmu prasījis, es zinu, ka viņiem nebūs viegli. (R\_I\_F\_94\_3)

Students in interaction process are helpful, as one of the students explained – ‘we help each other and very often student understands better if another student explains him the theme,<sup>78</sup> besides erudition there are other things necessary to become leader. ‘Few things are based on knowledge. It’s more about athletic accomplishments. Everybody wants to make friends with athlete.’<sup>79</sup>

‘Yes there is in school, but I don’t know anything about it. I think they discuss the most important questions. There are their rules in school.’ [...] ‘I think that schools government.’<sup>80</sup>

Sometimes participation in school after lesson activities is not possible because of circumstances that are not connected with school. ‘It’s not about the place. We just don’t want to change places. My daughter is attending aerobics lessons since she was five.’<sup>81</sup>

‘Naturally, basic ranges of students that study in this school are Latvians.’<sup>82</sup> It helps teachers to ensure that all students communicate mainly in Latvian, that is the language necessary the most to achieve good academic results in and successful participation in final exams of the secondary level.

‘There are few Russian teachers, but they all speak only Latvian, otherwise they would not be able to work at this school.’<sup>83</sup> Mainly all teachers speak not only in Latvian, but in Russian and English as well.

#### 4.3. Community education

At the moment in Riga Secondary school No. 94 there were no regular family or community education courses offered at the school. Although participants mainly haven’t thought about necessity of community or parental education, they acknowledge that it might have great potential.

<sup>78</sup>Mēs palīdzam un bieži vien ir tā, ka tas skolēns labāk izskaidro nekā tas skolotājs. (C\_I\_F\_94\_1)

<sup>79</sup>Mūsu klasē uz zināšanām maz kas balstās. Balstās uz tiem, kas ir sportiskāks, un kas ar tiem sportistiem draudzējas. (C\_I\_M\_94\_4)

<sup>80</sup> Skolas vadība, es domāju. (R\_I\_F\_94\_2)

<sup>81</sup>Ne jau tas, ka visu laiku skolā, vienkārši nu mēs esam pasākuši iet uz vienu vietu, un tad mēs arī nemainām. Meita man ar aerobiku nodarbojas no piecu gadu vecuma. (R\_I\_F\_94\_2)

<sup>82</sup> Proporcioniāli dabīgi, ka pamattautība latvieši ir vairākumā. (F\_I\_M\_94\_3)

<sup>83</sup> Krievu tautības skolotāji ir daži, bet viņi visi runā brīvi latviski, jo citādi viņi nevarētu strādāt skolā. (T\_I\_F\_94\_2)

Parent who isn't satisfied with questions involving student education said: 'It's not teachers, but the system is a problem.'<sup>84</sup> During the conversation it later appeared that he is incompetent in teacher duties. That illustrates the necessity to educate parents and inform them not only about educational system, but communication practice with children.

Headmaster of the Riga Secondary school No. 94 tells that they have practice in community education: 'We organize lectures for parents that take place during parental meetings. We invite people, who come to give information, that we consider as essential – about child-parent relationships; generation gap.'<sup>85</sup> But these lectures are too formal to have any actual result.

There are parents who don't attend parental meetings because they don't know the language. 'We have Russian children whose parents don't speak Latvian, because they don't understand. They feel uncomfortable.'<sup>86</sup> It could be an inclusive community education practice to teach parents Latvian.

The most popular parent attitude to education is – 'If he has volition to study, then he'll study.'<sup>87</sup> In order to provide student with motivation and give objective reasons parents tend to set education as obligatory necessity for secured future.

'Parents navigate their children to high-flying aims, education. I believe that there is correlation between this attitude to education and parent educational level.'<sup>88</sup>

#### 4.4. Inclusion of multiculturalism into planning instrumental subjects

One non-Latvian student in an interview brought out his practice: 'I started to read more books in Latvian and Russian. If you read a lot perception gets better.'<sup>89</sup>

<sup>84</sup> Pedagogos nav vaina Nepareiza programma. (R\_I\_F\_94\_1)

<sup>85</sup> Mēs organizējam šīs lekcijas vecākiem vecāku lielajā sapulcē. Mēs aicinām cilvēkus, kas vecākiem kā lektori nodod to informāciju, kas mums šajā brīdī šķiet aktuāla, par vecāku attiecībām ar bērnu, par šiem paudžu konfliktiem. (F\_I\_M\_94\_3)

<sup>86</sup> Pie mums mācās krievu tautībās bērni un vecāki latviski nerunā vecāku sapulcēs, jo viņi nesaprot. Viņiem neērti. (T\_I\_F\_94\_2)

<sup>87</sup> Ja viņam ir gribēšana mācīties, tad viņš mācīsies. (R\_I\_F\_94\_2)

<sup>88</sup> Tie ir vecāki, kas tendē savus bērnus uz godkārīgiem mērķiem, labāku izglītību, viņu izglītībai nav nekāds sakars, paseko līdz, tā kā šeit es nevaru teikt, ka ir atšķirība, lai gan dabīgi, ja mēs salīdzinām, visi dati liecina, tajās ģimenēs, kur ir izglītības līmenis augstāks, tā attieksme arī ir labāka. (F\_I\_M\_94\_3)

The school staff members believes that individual approach allows students to learn to integrate with students of diverse backgrounds and overall, be seen as individuals who have the ability to succeed.

'There are subjects where it's not possible to do without anything besides book. Teachers help is very necessary.'<sup>90</sup>

There were situations where students in interviews mentioned that they do study about different cultures, but only in the context of learning programme. There is no deeply inquiring material about cultures, which minority students represent.

#### 4.5. Overcoming gender stereotypes

There is diverse staff in school that helps to overcome gender stereotypes, although progress still remains to be made in this area. The staff members serve as role-models for the students, because only one out of five employees who works in educational system is male. Overall in Latvia female monthly salary in 2005 was approximately 72% of male monthly salary in the state. That decreases teacher occupations popularity. One of students said – 'there is this stereotype that man needs a real job.'<sup>91</sup>

At the same time teachers do not enforce gender stereotypes, and they never group students by gender. The only subject where requirements are different for girls and boys is sports; this grouping is motivated by biological differences. Some teachers encourage students to choose their future professions irrespective of their gender and the stereotypes about typically female and male professions.

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<sup>89</sup> Es sāku gan vairāk lasīt, gan krievu, gan latviešu grāmatas, jo ātrāk lasot palielinās uztvere. (C\_I\_F\_94\_4)

<sup>90</sup> Ir tādi priekšmeti, kur iztikt ar grāmatu nav iespējams. Vajadzīga arī skolotāju palīdzība. (C\_I\_F\_94\_2)

<sup>91</sup> Stereotipi, ka vīriešiem vajag riktīgu darbu. (C\_I\_F\_94\_1)

## 5. Conclusions

Riga Secondary school No. 94 was chosen for the case study to explore effective educational practices that are decreasing the rates of school failure and those practices that are increasing them at secondary education level according to the methodology established in Annex 1.

The school works with students from several disadvantaged groups and there are no entrance examinations at the beginning of secondary education level in Riga Secondary school No. 94.

The results of the case study give examples of transformative practices that contribute to school success and exclusionary practice those, which are in need of improvement.

As the most important findings that demonstrate inclusive practices should be mentioned:

- All students have the same exercises and tasks.
- Individual assistance during consultative classes helps students from disadvantaged groups to overcome those factors that prevent them from equal opportunities in the educational system.
- No segregation practices are found in the school in the grouping of students.
- There is a book market each year, so students can buy second hand books from previous year students cheaper.
- Teachers have high expectations for all students.

As practices that might be considered as exclusionary there are:

- Different expectations for students, mainly all teachers, parents and relatives admitted that it's not possible to ask the same talent to each student in all subjects.

- Parents participate passively in all activities that take place in school especially decision making process and inclusion of multiculturalism in planning subjects.
- There is lack of community education.

The case study in Riga secondary school no. 94 made participants who are included in the educational process to think more about possibilities of development – systematical community courses; improving inclusionary practices in planning and about providing more opportunities for disadvantaged groups.